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## Choosing the Profession of Homemaking

Anna E. Richardson

*Iowa State College*

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# THE IOWA HOMEMAKER

"A Magazine for Homemakers from a Homemakers' School"

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## Choosing the Profession of Homemaking

By ANNA E. RICHARDSON

Dean of the Division of Home Economics

IT is not so many years since the only alternative open to a young woman was either to choose homemaking as her life occupation or to remain a respectable but much pitied "spinster" or maiden aunt. The intervening years have brought great changes and now the census lists show something like 160 occupations in which women are employed.

Has opening the doors of industry and of the professions thinned the ranks of homemakers? Not perceptibly for it is still the occupation which claims the greatest number of workers and into which the majority of our well trained women go.

Special training is not essential for entrance into this occupation, for selection is made largely upon the basis of that important yet somewhat intangible something, the sum total of which we call personality. Success, however, comes to her whose training and experience fit her to meet the manifold demands which this vocation makes.

What are some of the challenges of the modern homemaker? First, that she be vocationally efficient. This means that she should know as much about running her job as she expects the man she marries to know about his; that she be master of its techniques and skills; that she effectively manage her business and at the same time maintain the social and spiritual values which make for sympathetic understanding and happiness in our personal relations.

The emphasis in homemaking is shifting from the doing of many things to the wise management of the family's resources of time, energy, and money. The home of two generations ago was a productive enterprise in a very real sense. The housewife with the help of her household turned raw materials, such as wool, cotton, flax, and all variety of food stuffs by means of human energy into finished products for use in the home as clothing, house furnishings, and food. There was no question then as to the economic contribution of the household, it either was economically sound or the family's wants were not supplied.

Today, the woman in the home no longer furnishes to a great degree energy in the shape of woman power, but she is required to intelligently control and manage to her ends energy in the shape of labor-saving equipment in her own home, or the results of energy in the shape of manufactured goods. Woman's place in the economic structure is decreasingly that of a producer and increasingly that of a chooser of goods, a consumer.

### FOR A LITTLE HOUSE

Oh, to have a little house! !

To own the hearth and stool and all!

The heaped-up sods upon the fire,

The pile of turf against the wall!

To have a clock with weights and chains  
and pendulum swinging up and down!

A dresser filled with shining delf,

Speckled white and blue and brown!

I could be busy all the day

Clearing and sweeping hearth and floor,

And fixing on their shelf again

My white and blue and speckled store!

I could be quiet there at night

Beside the fire and by myself,

Sure of a bed and loth to leave

The ticking clock and shining delf!

Och, but I'm weary of mist and dark,

And roads where there's never a house  
nor bush;

And tired I am of bog and road,

And the crying of wind and the lone-  
some hush!

And I am praying to God on high,

And I am praying Him night and day,

For a little house—a house of my own—

Out of the wind and the rain's way.

—Padriac Colum.

The women, the country over, do most of the buying and the farm home is no general exception to this. Therefore, to be intelligent as buyers becomes one of the important duties of the homemaker if her home is to be economically sound. How can she choose intelligently? First, by carefully studying needs, and then by understanding values in the marketed product.

In place of expenditure of so much physical effort the time is fast approaching when management of machines will leave free time. How will the homemaker use this time so as to give to the family the largest returns? Only with leisure comes the opportunity for recreation, play, and for developing fine family relations without which no home in a real sense exists. Leisure alone, however, does not give us understanding parents,

wisdom in handling difficult personal relations, nor does it make for happiness. The second challenge which homemaking makes is that the homemaker be socially and spiritually fitted for the great responsibilities of wifehood and motherhood.

Some interesting studies have been made of the personality traits which are of prime importance in homemaking and of the methods by which personality may be developed. Those interested in homemaking as a profession will find this a very rich field for study, for she who would choose homemaking must be equipped to meet its demands and be willing to give time and effort in preparation. Homemaking is the most important of all of the occupations in which men and women are employed both on account of the importance of its product—happy, healthy, useful citizens—and because of the significance of the social and spiritual forces which surround it and which it controls.

Homemaking makes many and exacting demands in skill, personality, unselfish and generous time and effort but in turn it meets out the largest returns in happiness to her who meets its challenge.

### THE OLD HOUSE

O kindly house where time my soul endows

With courage, hope and patience manifold,

How shall my debt of love to thee be told,  
Since first I heard the sweet voiced robins rouse

The morn among thy ancient apple boughs?

Here was I nourished on the truths of old,  
Here taught against new times to make me bold,

Memory and hope the doorposts, O dear house!

Heaven's blessing rested on thy dark gray roof,

And clasped thy children age to lapsing age,

Birth and the grave thy tale till time's release;

Poverty did not hold from thee aloof;

Of lowly good thou wast the hermitage;

Now falls the evening light. God give thee peace!

—George Edward Woodberry.